(b) the number of workers/employees lost their jobs during this period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) and (b) From 1997 to 1999 closure of 428 industrial units in private sector, affecting 35,130 workers has been reported.

Phasing out of quantitative restrictions on imports

313. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have entered into an agreement with the USA to phase out all quantitative restrictions on imports by April, 2001;

(b) if so, the list of those commodities at 8-digits level;

(c) what is the maximum rate of basic customs duty that Government can impose after removal of quantitative restrictions on the import of commodities in the agricultural sector, textiles, automobiles, etc.; and

(d) whether the level of duty to be levied would be decided upon by countries having a hold in the WTO?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Consequent to the rulings and recommendations of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on the dispute filed by the United States of America on Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) maintained by India on imports, India and the USA have signed a bilateral agreement for removal of its remaining QRs on 1429 tariff lines at eight digit level maintained on balance of payments grounds by 1st April, 2001. The list of these items has been made available to the Parliament Library.

(c) and (d) Each Member of WTO has taken commitments on several tariff lines by fixing the bound rates of tariffs, which is the maximum permissible level to which tariffs can be raised. Applied tariffs are, however, determined by the Member country depending on various considerations, within these bound levels.

It may be mentioned that out of the 1429 tariff lines on which QRs are to be removed as per bilateral Agreement with USA, 863 tariff lines are unbound and on 355 tariff lines, the bound rates are higher than the applied rates. Thus, India has considerable leverage in raising the applied rates on these tariff lines to protect its domestic industry.